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HEADLINE: Japanese Imposing Sanctions on North Korea

BYLINE: By CLYDE HABERMAN, Special to the New York Times

DATELINE: TOKYO, Jan. 25

BODY:

Japan imposed diplomatic sanctions on North Korea today, saying it was convinced that 'organized terrorism from North Korea' was responsible for the bombing of a South Korean airliner two months ago.

The Japanese action meant that virtually all normal contact with the North Korean Government in Pyongyang would be cut off. The decision, however, did not affect Japan's limited trade with North Korea.

Japan has not formally recognized the Government in Pyongyang since the partitioning of the Korean Peninsula after World War II, but the two Governments have maintained a range of official contacts. Today's decision was thus a significant step in further isolating Pyongyang, which the United States last week placed on its list of nations that support terrorism.

The decision also meant that South Korea's two most important allies - Washington and Tokyo - accept its contention that the Korean Air jetliner was blown up on orders from Kim Jong Il, son of and designated successor to North Korea's leader, Kim Il Sung.

The explosion killed all 115 people who were on Flight 858, which disappeared near the Thai-Burmese border last Nov. 29. Two weeks ago, a North Korean woman, Kim Hyon Hui, publicly confessed in Seoul to having worked with a male accomplice to plant the bomb on the plane in an attempt to disrupt the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. Both of them bit into cyanide capsules after their capture, but only he died.

Japan, rarely bold in its foreign policy, has considered itself to be in an unusually delicate position in the air disaster. Officials have expressed unwillingness to do anything that might endanger two Japanese fishermen who have been held captive by North Korea for the last few years on what Japan calls trumped-up espionage charges.

The officials are also sensitive to apparent Japanese connections to the bombing. Miss Kim and her accomplice, Kim Sung Il, had traveled on forged Japanese passports. In addition, her confession said she had received lessons in Japanese customs from a Japanese woman living in Pyongyang.

The Japanese Government called the sabotage of the airliner an 'inexcusable act against world peace and order.'

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Contacts 'Severely Restricted'

From now on, Japanese diplomats will be "severely restricted" in their contacts with North Korean officials in third countries. All special flights from North Korea to Japan will be stopped, and, "in principle," Japanese and North Korean officials will be denied permission to visit each other's countries. Stricter investigations will also be made of ordinary North Koreans who come here. The phrase "in principle" seems to have been included to allow possible contacts should Pyongyang reconsider the case of the two fishermen.

SUBJECT: AIRLINES AND AIRPLANES; BOMBS AND BOMB PLOTS; INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS; TERRORISM

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